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ABSTRACT

The paper presents ways in which students and teachers can identify social, cultural, and economic relationships that they have with the world. The activities are aimed at high school level, but many can be modified for use at lower grades. They are designed in the belief that global awareness can be developed through realization of shared personal interests and economic and social interdependence. Over 60 activities involve students in examining their own families, schools, and towns for indications of linkage with other countries. To start, it is suggested that classes develop a resource file of community members such as immigrants, exchange students, Peace Corps returnees, or industrial personnel from agencies with overseas offices. Study of family trees, religious congregations, restaurants, foreign-born faculty members, and travel agency and hotel files can provide information on local ethnic and cultural ties. Analysis of newspaper datelines, television programming, local business product distribution, and imported merchandise indicates the global extent of media and economic activity. A concluding section lists nine sources or organizations helpful in studying local aspects of global interdependence. (Author/AV)

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THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND GLOBAL AWARENESS

An Occasional Paper

by

Deborah L. Truhan

The purpose of this paper is to explore ways in which students and teachers can identify both the concrete and the abstract linkages--social, cultural, and economic--that they share with the rest of the world.

As the typical American student pursues his educational career, a process of socialization occurs. During the years spent in school, a child's societal milieu is gradually expanded to encompass the community, the state, the region, and the nation. But in today's interdependent world, identification with the nation can no longer be the final step in this educational socialization process. The student must learn that he is also a member of a global society--one that reaches not only to Europe, but to Africa, Asia, and Latin America as well.

At first glance, this may seem to be an impossible task. How can one student relate to almost four billion individuals in some one hundred and fifty nations scattered over six continents? This can be encouraged by developing the students' knowledge and understanding of their interrelationships in much the same way that a student in Arkansas learns to comfortably share identity with another in New York, North Dakota, or Hawaii:

--Shared interests, such as football, environmental issues, 4-H Club or Scouting membership, are discovered.

--Linkages of interdependencies are found. Flooded, frozen, or drought-striken agricultural areas can cause increased food prices throughout the nation. A decision to stop buying "home town" products by large out-of-state consumers can lead to unemployment and decreased tax revenues. Far-off factories and industrial establishments contribute to local air and water pollution problems.

--Students in all parts of the United States learn that they share citizenship in our nation and that because of this they share vested interests and responsibilities.

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Part of the educator's job is to help his students expand their identities to include the global community, so that as they continue their education, they will have a more accurate perspective on topics and issues which they study. Learning about the world will be more interesting and more realistic if students can see some "reason" for knowing about the rest of our planet.

Teaching about the local community or region and its interconnections with other areas can be informative and enjoyable. However, the educational validity of including it in a global studies course comes from breaking down the students' sense of isolation from global contacts of one kind or another which influence their own lives and life styles. Thus, students begin to understand interdependence and how it affects them directly. It is a good point of departure for a global studies course.

As students tackle the following activities, the extent of the international contacts they uncover will vary, depending upon the size and location of the home town. Many surveys will be answered only partially the first time students conduct them. In many cases, these specific questions were never before asked, and information to answer them has never been separated from larger groupings of data. After the local community has been the focus of a few surveys for international linkages, you will know which exercises are most valuable in relation to the specific interrelationships of your community. New and additional questions can be designed, and over a few years, you can accumulate information which will highlight local trends. Some smaller locations may best be examined in terms of the region in which they are found. Or it may be that looking at the more historical aspects of the town's development will best illustrate the international linkages.

To Start

Students should develop a resource file of people in the community who are especially helpful in providing the kinds of information being sought. This should include:

--Immigrants, exchange students, and other overseas visitors

--Peace Corps returnees and veterans of military service

--Representatives of cultural or ethnic groups

--Industrial personnel, businessmen, and representatives of voluntary agencies with dealings overseas.

--Representatives of local planning offices and development commissions and of state departments of commerce and agriculture.

Note the interests and kinds of information which these people have. Also note whether they would be available to visit the classroom, as this is often a convenient way for the students to learn about some international activities when it is not possible for the entire class to take a field trip. This file should be updated and expanded every year.

Social, Cultural, and Ethnic Contacts

Having the students focus upon their own direct contacts (through family, friends, and community) with members of a variety of ethnic groups can highlight cultural ties with many parts of the world. Americans are a mixture of many peoples from many lands, some of whom continue their cultural traditions in the new context. The more up-to-date these cultural ties are, the better it is for the purpose of illustrating ethnic links to other regions of the world. If contemporary ties are not available or numerous, use historic data--"This section of town was settled by Germans in 1702, and this resulted in..." or "Did any of your great-great-grandparents come from another country?" As Alex Haley's book, Roots, has demonstrated, knowledge about native lands and customs can be passed along orally through several generations. Have the students interview the oldest members of their families and elderly members of the community.

Have the students research the following questions. As answers come in, they can be tabulated and illustrated on a world map. For younger children, you may wish to use colored yarn to "tie" the foreign locales of ethnic influence to the home town. With older students, you may wish to have them develop proportional maps emphasizing the origins of the linkages.

1. Is the student, or any of his relatives, a native of another country? Which one?

2. Does the student have family living outside the United States? Where?

3. Does the student hear or speak a language other than English at home? Which one?

4. Did any of the student's grandparents or great-grandparents emigrate to the United States? Where from? Why? For example, Russian grandparents who fled the 1917 Revolution, or the English, French, or Italian war bride of an American soldier after World War II.

5. Does the home town have any social or political associations or religious congregations which indicate a particular cultural heritage? What are they? Check the yellow pages of the telephone directory under Churches, Associations, Fraternal Organizations, Clubs, and Social Service Organizations. You may find Russian or Greek Orthodox Churches, African Methodist Episcopal Church, a Jewish synagogue, a Buddist temple, or a Moslem mosque, a Spanish-American club or Chinese community center, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Do they have any special festivals? What are they? Examples include

Chinese New Year, Mardi Gras or Carnival, Hannukah, St. Patrick's Day. Do any of the students or members of their families participants in these?

6. Does the home town have ethnic neighborhoods? What are they? Why did so many people from one country come to the home town?

7. Are there restaurants or food stores which specialize in the cuisine of a foreign country? What are they? Perhaps Italian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Mexican, French, Indian or Indonesian cooking. How is the food similar or different? This could include using different spices or a lot of garlic, not using pork, serving rice or spaghetti with everything.

8. Do local streets or place names have foreign derivations? What are they? What is the derivation? For example, Lafayette Street, Detroit, New Orleans- French; San Jose, Florida, the "barrio"- Spanish; Kosciusko Bridge- Polish; Chinatown; Little Italy; New England.

9. What languages are frequently heard on the streets of the home town?

10. Do the students live in an area where notices and instructions, voting information, advertising, etc., are often posted in languages other than English? What are they? Does the United States have any official languages besides English?

11. Find the number of foreign-born residents of the home town. What are the countries of origin? The United States Bureau of the Census issues reports giving data, by city, on the number of foreign-born and second generation residents by country of origin. Chart the changes over a few decades. What trends emerge?

Even in areas where there are not large communities reflecting one cultural heritage, there are foreign residents, visitors, and influences. These are potential contacts and can also be quantified and put on maps.

1. Do the students know any exchange students? Has anyone ever been an exchange student or belonged to a host family for an exchange student? Where do the students come from?

2. Does the school, or another local school or college, have exchange students? Where do they come from and what are they studying? American Field Service may be able to distribute information about high school exchange students to and from your city or region. The Institute of

International Education has information about foreign university students. Most colleges with exchange students also have a Foreign Student Office which can be helpful.

3. What about the faculty members of local schools and colleges? Are there foreign-born professors? Where are they from? What do they teach? Do they specialize in fields which cause them to travel outside the United States frequently?

4. At the local hospital, are all the doctors, nurses, and technicians on the staff Americans? If not, where do they come from?

5. Does the student have favorite authors, movie stars, recording artists, or sports heros from abroad? Who are they and where do they come from? For example, Camus-France, Tolkien-England, Dostoevski - Russia; Jean Paul Belmondo-France, Melina Mercouri-Greece, Cantinflas-Mexico, Bob Marley-Jamaica, Elton John-England, Roberto Carlos-Brazil; Pele-Brazil, Yvonne Goolagong-Australia, Nadia Comaneci-Romania.

6. Has the student ever bought anything with multilingual instructions? Where was it made? What were the languages?

7. Does the school offer bilingual classes or teach adult "English as a Second Language" courses at night?

8. What foreign languages are taught at the school? What are the ten most widely spoken languages in the world? How do the two compare? What other internationally oriented courses are there?

9. Are there any foreign consulates in the home town? If not, where are the nearest ones located? What are they? Why are they there (eg. promote tourism, economic interests)?

Travel abroad is yet another connection between the home town and other regions. This information, again, can be illustrated on maps.

1. Has the student, or any of his relatives, ever been outside the United States? Where? How long? For what reason (eg. vacation, travel, work, military service, missionary work, study)?

2. Conduct a survey of other teachers and schoolmates. Have they ever been abroad? Where? Why? How long?

3. Visit local travel agencies. What portion of their

work is involved with international travel? How many tickets are for destinations outside the United States every year? What are the destinations, and, if known, the purposes for travel?

4. Check local hotels to find the number of international visitors yearly, countries of origin, and the purpose, if known, of their visits. Most hosting organizations are affiliates of the National Council for Community Service to International Visitors.

5. Have any of the students ever had a foreign pen pal? From what country?

Information in the Media

The media-- newspapers, magazines, and television-- contain many references to other parts of the world and to our international linkages. As you quantify the information accumulated in the next three exercises, compare the kinds of information (political, economic, cultural, etc.) among the various regions. What parts of the world get the most media coverage? Which get the least?

1. Conduct a survey of the local newspaper (picking a day when it is thicker, rather than thinner). Count both the number of inches of coverage and the number of references about foreign events, activities, and/or personages. Check especially the food and automobile advertisements, the business or economic section, editorial comment, the sports and fashion sections, datelines (where articles were written), and the wire services (any used which do not originate in the United States).

2. Conduct a survey of television programing for a week. Observe the amount of time of presentation and also the number of direct references, including:

   a. news about places outside the United States
   b. foreign movies
   c. foreign television programs
   d. American television programs set in foreign locales
   e. advertisements by foreign corporations The "Fortune 500" listing of industrial companies abroad gives the names of multinational corporations headquartered outside the United States. It is published yearly in Fortune, and it can help you identify such corporations for this and other exercises.

3. Visit the school and the community libraries. How many magazines and newspapers in their collections come from abroad? Where do these reading materials come from,

and what percentage of the total collection do they form? Are any in languages other than English?

Local Organizations

Many service and membership organizations are international in scope, although we do not often think of this linkage. At times the local branch of an organization is directly involved abroad, but often it is in the national headquarters that this relationship is most obvious.

The Yearbook of International Organizations is a listing of 2500 non-governmental organizations with membership in at least three countries. Many of these are organizations which provide social or economic assistance abroad.

1. Have the students compile a list of local service organizations. (The League of Women Voters may be able to help.) Find out which are international. If possible, get their annual reports and study the kinds of activities they are involved in. Do the local branches have any direct foreign contacts? What are they, and what percentage of their total activities is oriented abroad?

2. Do any of the students, or members of their families belong to, or support, an internationally oriented organization? These could include church, Girl or Boy Scouts, Rotary, UNICEF, the Red Cross, Project Hope, Care, Inc., etc.

3. Survey churches, temples, and other houses of worship. What are the suggested ethnic origins of the religions themselves? Examples include Lutheran or Amish-German, Presbyterian-Scottish, Society of Friends-English, Moslem-Arabian, Eastern Orthodox-Greek. Do they serve specific ethnic groups? What is the origin of the architectural style of the buildings in which the houses of worship are located? (eg. Gothic, Byzantine, etc.)? What missionary programs do they have? What is the monetary value of the yearly donations to projects overseas?

Consumption Surveys

Every day we use or consume goods not wholly and completely of United States origin. In some cases, raw materials come from other countries, to be transformed into usable goods in this country. In other cases, component parts or products or finished manufactured goods are imported. Yet other times, the original design of the goods come from outside of the United States. These goods are in such common use that we rarely stop to think of the international linkages which make their use possible for us. Much of this data can be illustrated through the use of maps, as with the previous social/cultural

material. Some students might also enjoy making collages or posters which illustrate some of the international linkages, using pictures taken in the home town.

1. Have each student survey his home, looking for items which are produced or assembled, or whose designs, raw materials, or component parts, come from outside the United States. Find both the product and the probable country of origin. The students may find--

   a. Foods and beverages: chocolate, coffee, tea, bananas and other tropical fruit, cheeses, wines and other alcoholic beverages. Cans in which foods are preserved are no longer made of Bolivian tin, but the bauxite which is used to make aluminum is imported.

   b. Clothing: labeled "made" or "assembled" in Mexico or Taiwan, or some other country. Scottish sweaters, Belgian linen, Adidas sneakers, "French cut" blue jeans, and rugby shirts.

   c. Leather goods: shoes, jackets, coats, and purses labeled "made in Spain/Italy/Brazil/Argentina."

   d. Sports equipment: baseballs sewn in Haiti.

   e. Appliances and machinery: clocks and watches, cameras, sound systems, cars and motorcycles from Japan, Germany, France, Italy.

   f. Hobbies: stamp, mineral, and coin collections with samples from around the world.

2. Have the student survey local stores and make a list of all imported items, as well as a list of the countries of origin. This should include the following: automobile, (both cars and parts), bicycle and motorcycle, dairy, electronics, florist, gift, health food, liquor, photography, sporting goods, book and magazine stores.

3. Survey the school to find equipment which was produced abroad (eg. art equipment, cameras and projectors, sports equipment, etc.).

4. Check the school parking lot for the number of foreign-made cars. Where are they from? What portion of the total are they? Alternately, check the number of foreign cars passing along a main street in a given amount of time. What portion of the total traffic are they?

Economic Linkages

Truly compelling reasons for teaching and studying about global interrelationships begin to surface as the economic ties with areas we think and know little about are uncovered. These linkages mean employment, availability of necessary goods, and additional money in circulation in the local economy. In the cases of local businesses, try to find the value of exported goods, the number of jobs dependent on foreign markets and raw materials (in manufacturing and the import-export process itself), and, if possible, the resultant monetary value of the payroll of those involved in such employment.

1. If the home town is located along a rail line, river, or highway used for the transportation of produce or manufactured goods, survey the freight which passes through. What is its origin? Its final destination?

2. Does the local Chamber of Commerce have an international trade committee or some equivalent? Does it know of local industries involved in overseas trade? If so, which ones?

3. Are there any export-import businesses in the home town? How many? What products or services are involved? What countries are involved? Are foreign languages used in transacting this business?

4. Have any local businesses or industries suffered from foreign competition in production and/or sales? What are they? How has this affected the economy of the community? For example, steel production, cut flowers, semi-tropical fruits, shoe and garment industries, etc.

5. Are there any local tourist spots which attract foreign visitors? What are they (eg. Walt Disney World, colonial reconstructions)? Approximately how many foreign tourists do they attract annually? How much money do these tourists spend in the area? Are any people employed specifically to deal with these overseas visitors (eg. multilingual guides or hotel personnel)?

6. What is the source of the petroleum and natural gas used in the region? If from a foreign source, what would happen if the price rose or the supply were cut?

7. Is the home town located in an agricultural area? Are migrant workers employed? Where do they come from? Are petroleum-based fertilizers and pesticides used? Where do they come from? Where are the markets located? What kinds of foodstuffs are exported? What kinds of

events influence the market value and the costs of production? Do these products have competition from other parts of the world? What does this mean to prices?

8. Do any of the local banks have an international division? If so, what kinds of transactions do they handle? If not, do they have agreements with other banks that do have such divisions so that local needs can be taken care of? Are foreign currencies sold? Which ones? Are loans extended to foreign borrowers? If so, in what countries and for what kinds of projects?

9. Get annual reports of the local companies and study them for indications of international trade.

10. Are any local companies subsidiaries of larger corporations which are multinational with headquarters outside the United States? Are any owned by non-Americans? Which companies? How many people do they employ? Do any of the students have relatives working for these companies? How many foreign languages do they use in their business correspondence? Are the products sold in the United States, exported, or both? What is the origin of the raw materials used?

11. What about local American-owned firms? Do any of them depend upon imported raw materials or on foreign markets? What percentage of their business is dependent on foreign materials or markets? What would happen to local employment if either or both were suddenly unavailable?

12. Are any local retain stores or restaurants part of international chains? Which ones? Examples include Sears Roebuck & Company, Woolworth, and Kentucky Fried Chicken.

The U.S. Department of Commerce has wholesale data, in dollar amounts, for export sales of eighty American cities, entitled "Survey of the Origins of Exports by Manufacturing Establishments." Other sources of information are the individual state departments of commerce and agriculture.

As the time for studying international linkages comes to an end, compare the countries and regions with which the community is most familiar through ethnic connections, travel, and social organizations, with those that have strong economic interactions. Is as much known about the economic partners as is known about those nations with traditional cultural and social contact? Does a substantial amount of employment in the region depend upon relations with a country or countries about which little is known?

Further activities

The purpose of the preceding activities is to help students become aware of their own interdependent relationships with many countries. As you build upon the basis of this understanding throughout the rest of the course, helping the students comprehend the complexities of the interrelationships, it is recommended that you use some specific case studies to illustrate global interdependence. Case studies allow the student to examine a limited number of problems from many angles and also to learn about the research and activities in a number of fields which are helping to resolve these problems. In-depth study will relate the topic of the case study to many other vital, complex global issues, without overwhelming him by presenting them all at once. If you use the case study approach in the body of the course, you will have another opportunity to explore a linkage between the local community and the rest of the world. All nations are beset by a number of developmental problems. Developed nations have underdeveloped regions with grave problems, while developing nations have some relatively developed areas--the difference is in degree, not in kind. So as you look at some global development issues, look at the problems as they are manifest at home, as well as in their overseas form. This sharing of problems is yet another global linkage. Possible topics include:

-- commodities production and sale
-- energy
-- environmental issues
-- housing
-- hunger, malnutrition, and food supply
-- migrant workers
-- multinational corporations
-- population
-- unemployment and underemployment
-- urbanization and out-migration from rural areas

In Conclusion

Through these activities, the students should begin to develop a sense of interrelatedness with many other parts of the world--through common interests and social, cultural, and economic interdependencies. This is a necessary part of their educational experience, not only to help them as they continue their formal education, but more importantly, to help them understand the forces at large in the world in which they will function as adults. They will have to make professional choices, political choices, and personal choices. And they will have to live in a world in which these global trends and issues will increasingly influence the life styles of each and every one of them. It is basic to their well-being that they be given the skills and perspectives with which they can confront and understand global realities.

Resources

Many of the preceding exercises are borrowed or abridged from the following sources:

"Indy and the World: The Newspaper in the Classroom"
Better understanding of global events and how they affect us through the pages of the local newspaper

The Indianapolis Star and The Indianapolis News
307 North Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

"Interdependence: Indiana and the World"
A Teaching Unit

Mid-America Program for Global Perspectives
in Education
Dr. James Becker, Director
513 North Park Avenue
Bloomington, Indiana 47401

"Your Community in the World: The World in Your Community"
Discovering the international activities and foreign policies of people, groups, and organizations in your community

Dr. Chadwick F. Alger
Mershon Center
Ohio State University
199 West 10 Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43201

The following are sources of specific additional resource materials for teaching about your local area. These have been referred to in the body of this paper.

American Field Service
313 East 43 Street
New York, N.Y. 10017

Haley, Alex. Roots. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976.

Institute of International Education
809 U.N. Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017

League of Women Voters (National Headquarters)
1730 "M" Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

National Council for Community Service to International Visitors
Meridian House
1630 Crescent Plaza, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

Telephone directories are good sources of general information. Using both the yellow and the white pages, you can find places to start the community surveys. Under "Restaurants," for example, you can find which cuisines are represented in your community, while under "Consulates" you can find out if there are any governmental missions in the home town.

The U.S. Department of Commerce, which contains the Bureau of the Census, has a vast amount of information available. While local libraries will have some of their publications regarding trade and population, it may be necessary to go to one of the depository libraries which hold all federal publications. It is suggested that you telephone the nearest office of the Department of Commerce and explain specifically what information you are looking for and for what community. If they cannot give you the information, they can tell you where to look. The listing in the telephone book will be found under "United States Government."

Yearbook of International Organizations
International Publications Service
14 East 32 Street
New York, N.Y. 10016

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